5/19/70

Dear Ruth and Sam,

Writing Sam appears to be a futility, for after months of delay he has not responded to an inquiry having to do with the possibility of his help against harm done me by a fascist, a virulent anti-Semite.

I do not know what either of you thinks of Sherman Skolnick. I presume you both know of him only too well. Rather than being the man who once caused the resignation of two judges, he is a man as twisted in mind as nature made him in body, eaten with an endless need to get publicity at any cost, as a sort of self-justification, compensation requirement of his existence. He is a man of limitless irresponsibility and total intellectual dishonesty.

Having run out of local causes with which he could keep himself in the public eye, earlier this year he decided to turn to the assassination, equipped for this with an ignorance impossible to equal among literates. On February 7 he knew but two names of those who had written books on the subject, so he became an instant expert. Through a colleague on the staff at Columbia College he met a young man who had earlier lived in Chicago and who had helped me seek out some local angles of one aspect of a book I had written and copyrighted, but could not get printed. Under subterfuges consisting, essentially, of his promise to do no more than try and carry my Chicago investigations forward and the promise to check me me first, he obtained from this man, now living in Pittsburgh, two things, both included in the book: a series of my documents from the National Archives, FBI reports relating to one Thomas A Vallee, whoxx the Secret Service expected to try and kill JFK 11/2/63 and a series of Chicago records relating to the contrived arrest of Vallee. It happens that my copies of these all contain special marks for special purposes. Instead of getting in touch with me, which I doubt he ever intended, or carrying the investigation forward, as soon as Skolnick learned from the Chicago Journalism Review that an indictment was pending against a man involved in the Vallee arrest, Sgt. Daniel Groth, the same one of the Black Panther killings, he launched his campaign. It wasat this time that he got the documents from my man. First he used them as his own on WBSV, which has to this day refused to respond to my letters and failed to provide a requested tape, telling me by phone they do not have one. Then he got WCFL to "work" with him. They used this material in advance of his filing of an entirely spurious suit under a law none of the requirements of which he met. They issued his press release on it in their name, thus getting him a degree of national attention he could not have gotten for himself. They also refuse to answer letters. I have spoken to both by phone and have them and my conversation with Skolnick taped. I also have a taped (with permission on the tape) statement of the facts and misrepresentations by Skolnick from this friend. Skolnick was so anxious to get this publicity, to appear to be the man who brought retribution to Groth, whose indictment he had every reason to believe was in the works, that he didn't do the also-illegal thing he could have done, duplicate my work. He attached to his "suit" copies of my papers, including these distinctive added marks, thus leaving no doubt about the theft, for none of these marks are on the originals. Further, he never made any request of any nature of the Archives, a legal as well as akx logical prerequisites of a suit alleging suppression and seeking to invoke the so-called "Freedom of Information" Act.

Aside from any damages that might be obtained from WCFL and/or Metromedia, which seems to have some connection with the station that I have not attempted to check into, the things that concern me most of all are these:

His case is a legal fiction. Its only contact with reality is what he stole from me. The rest is the wildest imaginings into which he has woved defamations so serious he has defamed those you'd not think it possible to defame. It inevitably will be thrown out of court. This, of course, is what I also seek. However, if it is thrown out on motion of the government, there will be enormous headlines, "Warren Report Vindicated", or "No Suppressions in JFK Murder", things like that. This will do much damage to what I have worked so hard for and, I suggest, will not be to the interest of any concerned citizen. Moreover, it will do similar damage to viable suits against the government for just this kind of suppression. As a matter of fact, I have just won the first, against the Department of Justice. Such legal victories of significance do not get the attention in the press that irresponsible sensationalism seems to achieve. You will, however, be hearing more of this, I believe.

Through the friend who formerly lived in Chicago, Sam having not had time to reply to my earlier letter, I sought to find someone who would file for me the papers I would present or a lawyer who would represent me in this and an effort to collect damages (I presume Skolnick has nothing from which to collect). His report is that everyone is in fear of harrassment from Skolnick, and of this you should both be aware. Even the TV stations on which he appeared indicated this when I sought time for response, which is required by the FCC. They are afraid of him for he files these suits like normal people breathe, and it costs to defend them.

So, I wrote the court and asked if I could file a complaint by mail. Deputy Clerk E. Stuart Cunningham's response was not really an answer, but it did indicate I could, so I did. He now writes me about added requirements: that I also have local counsel, in effect, or a lawyer who presents me to the court, and that I file a $250 bond within the State of Illinois, where property will do. I have written him asking if these provisions can be waived and if he can tell me how to arrange a bond within the State in which I do not live. And I write you to see if you can help me in either way. Of Sam I do not ask that he do any work in court. I would handle my own case, and I would look forward to waiving pre-trial discovery proceedings and getting that skunk on the stand. Actually, it is important that I act with speed. My one wonder is why the government hasn't, because the case is so open and shut, and because they very much want this kind of publicity.

Not knowing the law, my opinion may be wrong, but I think collection is possible from WCFL because they did jot merely report the news. In this case they made it, with my property, with a reporter named Pahn (I also have him and his boss on tape) working with Skolnick and never making the most perfunctory check. Example: Skolnick alleges the record of the purchase of the alleged assassination rifle from Klein's us suppressed. It is the central argument of the Commission's argument, the beginning of the Report's chapter on "The Assin", where it is reproduced in facsimile. From this you can see how much "research" Skolnick has done. Or Checking by WCFL, where they had the Report and a phone call to Klein's, which gave the records to the FBI the night of the assassination, would have told them the fact.

Please excuse the typographical errors. I hope you are all well, including the friend who in his years of prosperity forgets friends who labor without prospect of prosperity so that he might enjoy his.

Sincerely,